

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RANGOO 02140 01 OF 02 140907Z

ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 NEAE-00 AID-05 HA-05 CA-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 EUR-12 /101 W

-----049713 141422Z /50

P R 140807Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5527

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

CINCPAC

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RANGOON 2140

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, SREF, BG, BM

SUBJECT: CHITTAGONIAN REFUGEES FROM ARAKAN STATE

REF: (A) DACCA 3712; (B) DACCA 3708; (C) RANGOON 2132 ALL (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: WE URGE THAT THE DEPARTMENT AVOID ANY CHANGE IN OUR PRESS GUIDANCE ON THE SUBJECT PROBLEM WHICH MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS FAVORING ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. THERE ARE SOME INCONSISTENCIES AND MISLEADING STATEMENTS BY REFUGEES CITED IN REF. B. WHICH NEED FURTHER CLARIFICATION, AND WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE EVIDENCE SO FAR PRESENTED WARRANTS A SHIFT IN THE US POSITION. END SUMMARY

1. WE BELIEVE THE DEPARTMENT SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS IN MAKING REVISIONS TO ITS PRESS GUIDANCE ON THE SUBJECT REFUGEE PROBLEM. IF SUCH CHANGE IS BASED ON REF. B, WE NOTE SOME INCONSISTENCIES AND MISLEADING STATEMENTS WHICH SHOULD BE CLARIFIED BEFORE REVISING THE PRESENT GUIDANCE.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 RANGOO 02140 01 OF 02 140907Z

2. PARAS 4 AND 6 OF REF. B CHARGE THAT GUB PATROLS ARE ATTEMPTING TO STEM THE FLOW OF REFUGEES NEAR GUNDUM AND NHILA CAMPS. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE REFUGEE FLOW IN MARCH, THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT URGED THAT THE GUB TAKE MEASURES TO HALT THIS MIGRATION. IF THE REFUGEES STATEMENTS QUOTED IN REF. B ARE TRUE, IT APPEARS THE GUB IS ATTEMPTING TO COMPLY

WITH THIS REQUEST. IT WOULD SEEM THAT THIS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT RATHER THAN CAUSE FOR FURTHER COMPLAINT. IT WOULD ALSO SEEM INCONSISTENT IN THE LIGHT OF THIS REPORT TO NOW AMEND PRESS GUIDANCE TO READ THAT "REFUGEES STATE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN...FORCED OUT OF THEIR VILLAGES IN NORTHERN ARAKAN." THE GUB MAINTAINS THAT THE REFUGEES PANICKED AFTER HEARING OF ARRESTS OF ALLEGED ILLEGAL BENGALI IMMIGRANTS IN AKYAB AND VOLUNTARILY FLED ACROSS THE BORDER WITHOUT FURTHER PRESSURE OR DURESS BEING APPLIED. AS EVIDENCE THE BURMESE CAN CITE MUSLIM VILLAGES IN THE AREA WHO INHABITANTS DID NOT FLEE AND WHO REMAIN IN BURMA UNMOLESTED. AT ANY RATE THERE STILL SEEMS CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE FOR BOTH SIDES OF THE ISSUE AND WE CAUTION AGAINST ANY "TILT" TOWARD ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER.

3. FOR THE RECORD, WE ALSO WISH TO POINT OUT SOME MISLEADING STATEMENTS BY THE REFUGEES REGARDING BURMESE DISCRIMINATION AGAINST THE MUSLIM MINORITY WHICH ARE QUOTED IN REF. B. IT IS TRUE THAT MUSLIMS ARE NOT PERMITTED TO HAVE THEIR OWN SCHOOLS. THE NE WIN REGIME NATIONALIZED AND SECULARIZED ALL RPT ALL SCHOOLS IN BURMA SHORTLY AFTER IT ASSUMED POWER. HENCE, ALL PRIVATE AND RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS, INCLUDING CHINESE SCHOOLS, CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AND BUDDHIST SCHOOLS, ARE PROHIBITED. THIS PROHIBITION IS ENFORCED VERY EVENLY. (INCIDENTLY, GOVERNMENT SERVICES ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY IN RURAL AREAS THROUGHOUT BURMA, NOT JUST IN THE ARAKAN.)

4. AS NOTED IN PREVIOUS REPORTS, BIRTH IN BURMA DOES NOT AUTO-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 RANGOO 02140 01 OF 02 140907Z

MATICALLY ENTITLE AN INDIVIDUAL TO BURMESE CITIZENSHIP. FOREIGNERS RESIDING IN BURMA (FRC HOLDERS) ARE ALL RPT ALL SUBJECT TO TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS. THE GUB MAY BE GUILTY OF LESS THAN FAIR TREATMENT OF FRC HOLDERS, BUT IT DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THE MUSLIM MINORITY PER SE. WHEN THE LAST AMERICAN MISSIONARIES (TWO CATHOLIC PRIESTS) DEPARTED BURMA SOME TWO YEARS, THEY CITED THE RESTRICTIONS AGAINST THEIR TRAVEL WITHIN THEIR PARISHES AS ONE REASON WHY THEY LEFT AND TURNED ALL RESPONSIBILITY OVER TO LOCAL CLERGY. THE EMBASSY IS ALSO AWARE OF CASES WHERE THIS RESTRICTION HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THE FEW NON-BURMESE BUDDHIST MONKS RESIDING IN THE COUNTRY.

5. PARA 5 REFTTEL A REFERS TO POSSESSION OF BURMESE-ISSUED RESIDENCE CERTIFICATES BY A LARGE NUMBER OF REFUGEES. (WE DID NOT RECEIVE DACCA 3640, TO WHICH THIS PARAGRAPH IN TURN REFERS TO WE ARE A LITTLE IN THE DARK AS TO WHAT WAS FOUND IN THE WAY OF DOCUMENTS.) ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSES OF GUB NAGAMIN OPERATIONS WAS TO EXAMINE THESE CERTIFICATES AND DETERMINE WHICH WERE GENUINE AND WHICH WERE FRAUDULENTLY OBTAINED. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION AVAILABLE HERE (NOT FROM THE GUB), BURMESE NEGLECT AND CORRUPTION OVER THE PAST 25 YEARS HAS LED TO THE FRAUDULENT ISSUANCE OF LARGE NUMBERS OF RESIDENCY CERTIFICATES BY

LOCAL OFFICIALS (NOT ONLY IN THE ARAKAN). THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS OF WIDESPREAD FORGERY OF SUCH DOCUMENTS. THE CERTIFICATES CANNOT THEREFORE BE TAKEN AS PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE OF THE LEGAL RIGHT OF THE HOLDER TO RESIDE IN BURMA.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 RANGOO 02140 02 OF 02 141339Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 NEAE-00 AID-05 HA-05 CA-01
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 EUR-12 /101 W
-----052140 141422Z /50

P R 140807Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5528
INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
CINCPAC
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RANGOON 2140

6. AT DINNER ON JUNE 13, THE AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED BURMESE-BANGLADESHI ISSUES WITH THE BRITISH, AUSTRALIAN, WEST GERMAN AND MALAYSIAN AMBASSADORS. TO A MAN THE OTHER DIPLOMATS AGREED THAT ON THE BASIS OF THEIR INFORMATION THE BANGLADESH CHARGES APPEARED TO BE CONSIDERABLY EXAGGERATED AND INCONSISTENT. THEY ALSO NOTED THAT JOURNALISTS OTHER THAN THE ONE AMERICAN EMBOFFS MET WITH (RANGOON 2132) SAW NORMALLY FUNCTIONING MULSIM VILLAGES IN THE ARAKAN WHICH WERE NOT BEING HARASSED BY GUB AUTHORITIES.

7. THE MALAYSIAN AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN ASKED AT THE RECENT ISLAMIC CONFERENCE TO BECOME INVOLVED AS A MEDIATOR IN THE DISPUTE BETWEEN THE BANGLADESH AND BURMA, BUT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO DO SO. (BURMESE OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD OTHER DIPLOMATS THAT THE GUB DOES NOT WANT OR NEED MALAYSIA OR ANY OTHER THIRD COUNTRY TO MEDIATE.)

8. COMMENT: WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL THAT THE GUB HAS EMBARKED ON A SYSTEMATIC CAMPAIGN TO DRIVE MUSLIMS OF CHITTAGONIAN ANCESTRY FROM THE ARAKAN, OR THAT THE REFUGEE-ALLEGED ATROCITIES HAVE OCCURRED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 RANGOO 02140 02 OF 02 141339Z

ON THE SCALE CLAIMED BY THE BDG, OR ARE THE RESULT OF GUB POLICY
OR EVEN OF A SERIOUS BREAKDOWN IN POLICE OR MILITARY DISCIPLINE.
STRICT NEUTRALITY ON THE MERITS OF THE ISSUE IS STILL IN ORDER,
EVEN AS WE DO WHAT WE CAN TO ALLEVIATE THE HUMAN SUFFERING
INVOLVED.
BEAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, INSTRUCTIONS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978RANGOO02140
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780248-0656
Format: TEL
From: RANGOON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780660/aaaabzrr.tel
Line Count: 181
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7b6b3289-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 DACCA 3712, 78 DACCA 3708, 78 RANGOON 2132
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2356771
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHITTAGONIAN REFUGEES FROM ARAKAN STATE
TAGS: PEPR, SREF, BG, BM, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7b6b3289-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014